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CONTACT: Roxane Marquez at (213) 974-4111 (office)
or (213) 598-5463 (cellular)

GLORIA MOLINA HOSTS FINAL FREE CANVAS BAG GIVEAWAY IN L.A. COUNTY

Hundreds of No-Cost Reusable Bags Distributed at 'El Super' in East L.A.

Plastic Bag Ban Effects Unincorporated Area Supermarkets on July 1

LOS ANGELES (June 29, 2011)—Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina hosted L.A. County's final free canvas bag giveaway at El Super in East L.A. today to prepare unincorporated area consumers for a plastic bag ban which takes effect at local supermarkets on Friday, July 1, 2011. Free carryout plastic bags will be history in all unincorporated area stores—and shoppers will need to bring a reusable bag with them to avoid a 10 cent charge per recyclable paper bag.

"To help make the transition easier for consumers, we've been giving away thousands of free canvas bags at participating supermarkets across L.A. County throughout the month of June," Molina said. "It's our way of encouraging everyone to do what's right for the environment."

"We're ready for implementation of the plastic bag ban," said Pat Proaño, Division Engineer for Environmental Programs with the county's Dept. of Public Works. "L.A. County will start monitoring compliance starting July 1 for all large grocery stores with at least 10,000 square feet of retail space and with gross receipts of over \$2 million annually. Smaller 'mom and pop' stores will need to comply with the new ordinance starting Sunday, January 1, 2012."

"The East Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce is fully supportive of L.A. County's plastic bag ban," said Eddie Torres, former Chamber President. "For months, we've been educating East L.A. businesses about the ordinance. It's important to us to do our part and be good corporate citizens."

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Molina's free canvas bag giveaway marks the conclusion of her two year-long Green Bag for a Clean Earth campaign to promote reusable bag use throughout the First Supervisorial District. It started in the Summer of 2009, when she enlisted over 1,450 Florence-Firestone students as "Earth Defenders" to reduce their families' use of plastic bags—which notoriously pollute county waterways, overload landfills, and harm marine life. Students received "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" prize cards. Those who amassed the most stickers on it over a two-month period each time they or their parent shopped with a canvas bag instead of a plastic bag at local participating stores received prizes—as did teachers representing classrooms with the top prize card utilization rate.

By the end of the summer, Florence-Firestone students prevented approximately 4,000 plastic bags from heading straight to the garbage, landfills, and rivers. In the Fall of 2009, Molina enlisted over 3,800 Valinda students as Earth Defenders. They saved close to 7,000 plastic bags from the trash. In the Spring of 2010, over 4,000 East L.A. students joined the Green Bag for a Clean Earth cause and prevented over 7,500 plastic bags from being used.

"I am so proud of our First District unincorporated youth for preventing more than 18,500 plastic bags from filling county landfills and clogging our waterways," Molina said. "They understand the importance of protecting our environment and they've seen what a difference they can make."

Photos of Molina's "Green Bag for a Clean Earth" campaign launches in Florence-Firestone, Valinda, and East Los Angeles can be found on her website at molina.lacounty.gov. For more information on the plastic bag ban, visit www.aboutthebag.com or call (888) CLEANLA.

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